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General Assembly

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Official Records

23rd plenary meeting
Thursday, 9 October 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 154

Judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/63/458)

Letter from the President of the Security Council addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/63/470)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before taking up agenda item 154, I would like to consult members with regard to proceeding to the consideration of this agenda item. In this connection, I would like to draw attention to the relevant provision of rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

> "No additional item may, unless the General Assembly decides otherwise by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, be considered until seven days have elapsed since it was placed on the agenda and until a committee has reported upon the question concerned."

In the absence of an objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed to the consideration of agenda item 154.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite the attention of the Assembly to documents A/63/458 and A/63/470. In document A/63/458, the Secretary-General transmitted two letters, dated 5 June 2008 and 1 September 2008, from Judge Fausto Pocar, President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. In his letter, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that the President seeks the extension of the terms of office of the permanent and ad litem judges elected to serve with the Tribunal in 2005 and whose terms of office expire on 16 November 2009 and 23 August 2009, respectively. The Secretary-General also states that the President has requested an extension of the terms of the remaining ad litem judges who are not currently appointed to serve at the Tribunal.

The Secretary-General further informs the Assembly that the President has provided details on the necessity and urgency of this request, which is primarily to ensure that the judges may complete the cases to which they are assigned. As the statute of the International Tribunal does not provide for the extension of the terms of office of the judges, the approval of the Security Council, as the parent organ of the International Tribunal, and of the General Assembly, as the organ that elects its judges, would be needed.

In document A/63/470, the President of the Security Council transmits to the President of the General Assembly the text of Council resolution 1837

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

08-54359 (E)

(2008) of 29 September 2008, whereby the Council, inter alia:

"1. Decides to extend the terms of office of the following permanent judges at the Tribunal who are members of the Appeals Chamber until 31 December 2010, or until the completion of the cases before the Appeals Chamber if sooner:

–Liu Daqun (China)

–Theodor Meron (United States of America)

–Fausto Pocar (Italy)

–Mohamed Shahabuddeen (Guyana)

"2. Decides to extend the terms of office of the following permanent judges at the Tribunal who are members of the Trial Chambers until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned if sooner:

–Carmel Agius (Malta)

–Jean-Claude Antonetti (France)

–Iain Bonomy (United Kingdom)

–Christoph Flügge (Germany)

–O-Gon Kwon (South Korea)

–Bakone Justice Moloto (South Africa)

–Alphons Orie (The Netherlands)

–Kevin Parker (Australia)

–Patrick Robinson (Jamaica)

–Christine Van den Wyngaert (Belgium)

"3. Decides to extend the terms of office of the following ad litem judges, currently serving at the Tribunal, until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned if sooner:

Ali Nawaz Chowhan (Pakistan)

Pedro David (Argentina)

Elizabeth Gwaunza (Zimbabwe)

Frederik Harhoff (Denmark)

Tsvetana Kamenova (Bulgaria)

Uldis Kinis (Latvia)

Flavia Lattanzi (Italy)

Antoine Kesia-Mbe Mindua (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Janet Nosworthy (Jamaica)

Michèle Picard (France)

Árpád Prandler (Hungary)

Kimberly Prost (Canada)

Ole Bjørn Støle (Norway)

Stefan Trechsel (Switzerland)

"4. Decides to extend the term of office of the following ad litem judges, who are not currently appointed to serve at the Tribunal, until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of any cases to which they may be assigned if sooner:

Melville Baird (Trinidad and Tobago)

Frans Bauduin (The Netherlands)

Burton Hall (The Bahamas)

Frank Höpfel (Austria)

Raimo Lahti (Finland)

Jawdat Naboty (Syrian Arab Republic)

Chioma Egondu Nwosu-Iheme (Nigeria)

Prisca Matimba Nyambe (Zambia)

Brynmor Pollard (Guyana)

Vonimbolana Rasoazanany (Madagascar)

Krister Thelin (Sweden)

Klaus Tolksdorf (Germany)

Tan Sri Dato Lamin Haji Mohd Yunus (Malaysia)."

If there is no objection, I propose that the Assembly decide to endorse this recommendation of the Secretary-General, which was endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1837 (2008) of 29 September 2008.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 154.

Agenda items 10 and 101

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218 and Corr.1)

The President: I am very pleased that we have this opportunity to discuss the Secretary-General's reports on the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. The Commission and its Fund are two new initiatives born of our determination that the United Nations be equipped to assist countries emerging from conflict to secure long-term peace in the twenty-first century. They represent new additions to the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations and we must keep in mind that they are still constructions in progress and need our full attention and support.

Given the record of peace accords that have failed in their first years, those reform initiatives fill a long-standing gap in our peacemaking architecture. They are examples of the United Nations doing things differently and learning from past lessons of success and failure. They arise from efforts to find new ways to promote partnerships and solidarity in post-conflict situations that have been misunderstood and neglected in the past.

The Commission, the Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office are demonstrating the importance of broad-based partnerships that count on the dynamic support of the entire United Nations membership, including the main troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping missions and the major donor countries. With that support, those new entities bring together the Organization's political, security, development and human rights components in an integrated approach to addressing the tremendous challenges in post-conflict situations.

The success of the Peacebuilding Fund in meeting its original target of $250 million and the broad base of its contributors are also testimony to the confidence vested in the United Nations. It reflects the commitment of the international community to closing a critical funding gap in the transition from violence to sustainable peace and development.

Two years after their creation, the Commission and the Fund continue to explore new ways to address the challenges that many post-conflict situations represent to the world. The reports before us today reflect the encouraging progress made by the Commission, the Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office in addressing critical post-conflict priorities. Their initial work focused on the post-conflict situations in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. Today, they are also assisting the Central African Republic. The Fund has also supported peacebuilding initiatives in Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Guinea, Liberia, Kenya and Nepal.

The reports provide a candid analysis of the challenges that lie ahead for the Commission and the Fund. I have voiced my concern about the need to sustain those and other efforts to fulfil the Charter's mandates of peace and security, as well as economic and social development, in these times of global financial crisis. We must ensure that the collective action and commitment of Member States, concerned countries, the United Nations system and all relevant international and regional actors are sustained in the months and years ahead.

The relevance and credibility of the new United Nations peacebuilding architecture will ultimately be measured by its ability to mobilize international support that delivers tangible peace dividends to the people of Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. Those dividends are needed now — not two, three or five years from now.

It must also enhance national capacities to sustain peace and rebuild the foundations for longer-term socio-economic development. To succeed, its work must respect the principle of national ownership of all peacebuilding efforts and must involve regional and subregional actors to widen the impact of peace and stability.

To that end, I call on the international community to continue to strengthen the capacities of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. New and predictable financial and human resources must be channelled to address the critical priorities determined by the countries concerned.

The General Assembly will have other opportunities during this session to engage in critical discussions on post-conflict peacebuilding. As a parent organ of this architecture, we welcome that responsibility. The Assembly will consider the Secretary-General's proposed review of the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund. We will also review the Secretary-General's recommendations

aimed at improving the United Nations response in early recovery and post-conflict situations.

I also call on all members to demonstrate a spirit of partnership and responsibility so that we can move ahead with electing new members of the Commission in all pending categories of membership. I intend to invest the time and effort needed to attain that objective before the end of the year.

These represent opportunities for the General Assembly, with its universal membership and moral authority, to utilize the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the services of the Peacebuilding Fund to promote a more democratic, coherent and agile United Nations. Our credibility and leadership will be measured by our ability to respond to the needs of societies aspiring to peace, stability and prosperity.

I see today's debate as an opportunity for Member States to reflect on the question of how the General Assembly can best support and reinforce the lofty goals of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. We must aim for nothing less than significant change in policies and attitudes on the part of all relevant stakeholders in addressing the plight of societies emerging from conflict.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, who is also the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): Thank you, Mr. President, for a very important and encouraging introductory statement, which will guide our work and this debate.

Today, I am very pleased to present the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its second year of activity (A/63/92). The report covers the wide range of activities undertaken by the Commission during its previous session. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of its members, the Commission made steady progress and produced concrete results in many areas of its work. As the President stated, the four country-specific configurations engaged in intensive work to produce tangible progress on the ground.

With regard to Burundi, the Monitoring and Tracking Mechanism of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding was adopted in December 2007, and the focus was changed to implementation. This June, the first biannual review was conducted, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Løvald of Norway; it called for further efforts in areas such as good governance, compliance with the Ceasefire Agreement, the security sector, the rule of law, the land issue and socio-economic recovery. The mobilization of international assistance was also emphasized, as well as the subregional dimension and the gender issue. Ambassador Lidén of Sweden has now taken over as Chair.

Concerning Sierra Leone, the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework was adopted in December 2007. Under the chairmanship of Ambassador Majoor of the Netherlands, the biannual review in June recommended youth employment and empowerment, energy, the global food crisis and rising oil prices as areas that would require special attention.

Guinea-Bissau was referred by the Security Council in December 2007, and the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Viotti of Brazil, adopted the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding on 1 October. The elections to be held in mid-November; economic and infrastructure rehabilitation, including the energy sector; security sector reform; the rule of law and the fight against drug trafficking; public administration reform; and social questions: these have been identified as priority areas.

The Central African Republic was referred in June 2008. Work has just begun, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Grauls of Belgium, to formulate an integrated strategy by making full use of the lessons learned from the experiences of other configurations.

With strong leadership by the Chairs of the country-specific configurations, the Peacebuilding Commission continued to focus sustained attention on support for national efforts. Interaction within the Commission and with others strengthened the notions of the primary responsibility of national Governments, national priorities, the partnership of the international community and mutual accountability, while encouraging interaction among national stakeholders and international partners. That cooperative approach of the Peacebuilding Commission is its greatest asset and has added value to ongoing national and international efforts.

In that connection, I would like to express my appreciation for the prompt approval by the General

Assembly of the necessary funding for the field missions of country-specific configurations and the visits of the Chairs, which were particularly valuable in the Commission's engagement with the countries under its consideration.

Secondly, there are many other countries in the world besides those four that are in the post-conflict peacebuilding process and face various types of challenges. The Peacebuilding Commission may provide useful support for efforts to address those challenges by developing a strategy and policies for effective peacebuilding efforts. With that purpose in mind, the Organizational Committee conducted in-depth strategic and policy discussions — for example, on the role of the private sector and the synergy between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

In the same vein, the Working Group on Lessons Learned, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador, took up topics such as peacebuilding frameworks, local governance and decentralization, the gender issue, transitional justice and internal displacement. The synthesis report issued after the last meeting could serve as a good basis for future work to develop best practices.

Thirdly, serious efforts were made to enhance partnerships at the highest level, in particular with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the African Union and the European Union. United Nations bodies in New York, Geneva and Vienna were all mobilized. Regular contacts with the Presidents of principal organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — were also established. Many outreach efforts were made by the Chairpersons and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) to deepen understanding of the specific needs of post-conflict countries and the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. In that connection, I would like to acknowledge the particular value of the seminars and workshops organized recently in many places in the world, including Geneva, Tokyo, Brussels and Alpbach, Austria. We are grateful to the PBSO for providing valuable support in assisting the work of the Commission in all those areas.

What of the way forward? We have made steady progress, as you kindly acknowledged, Mr. President. We must continue our efforts to produce more concrete results. I would like to outline four priority areas that need to be focused upon.

First, we must continue to produce more tangible results on the ground. We should bring about visible impacts of direct benefit to the people of the countries under consideration. In order to consolidate peace, it is essential that people can actually see and experience the signs of the arrival of peace after a ceasefire, through such positive changes in their lives as electricity supply and the opening of schools and clinics. We need to elicit the support of all stakeholders and to mobilize resources, not only from traditional partners but also by bringing in new and non-traditional partners. I appeal to all Member States to extend their support to national efforts in the priority areas identified in the integrated strategies. Support for the successful conduct of elections in Guinea-Bissau in mid-November or in Burundi in 2010 are good examples to start with.

Secondly, it is important to deepen strategic and policy discussions. The strategy for international efforts at peacebuilding is still in the early stages of development. We must make our best effort to develop policies on how to fill the gap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding and also the gap between peacebuilding and development. There is a need to promote conceptual and policy guidance for effective peacebuilding efforts through discussions in the Commission. Topics such as youth employment, the role of the private sector, justice and peace and the subregional dimension may be considered. The Commission will also cooperate closely with the Secretariat in the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on early recovery and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Thirdly, it is important to strengthen partnerships. Building upon efforts to establish strong partnerships with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the regional development banks, it is essential to continue such efforts to make certain that the commitment of those partners is translated into specific programmatic cooperation on the ground. We also continue to engage actively with civil society organizations.

Fourthly, we must ensure the coherence of the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission. We will continue to ensure that all parts of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture work in a coherent and

coordinated manner for the sole purpose of serving the people on the ground. As additional countries are expected to be referred to the Peacebuilding Commission, the Commission will continue to improve the efficiency of its working methods, with a clear sense of the added value of its engagement.

The Peacebuilding Commission is still a new and evolving organ. The political and substantive support of the members of the General Assembly is critical in order for the Commission to advance its activities. The Commission places great importance on strengthening interaction with the General Assembly, as one of its parent organs. Last January, I was invited by the President of the General Assembly to an informal plenary meeting to have an interactive dialogue with the broader membership. That was very useful. I would greatly appreciate similar interactions in the future.

As a result of a stalemate on the allocation of the seats among the regional groups for the elections in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, both organs decided to take interim measures to extend the terms of some members. I join you, Mr. President, in urging Member States to make maximum efforts to overcome the impasse as soon as possible.

The foundation was laid in the first year, and we began to produce results in the second year. The third year will be the real test for this developing organ. The Peacebuilding Commission must consolidate its achievements and help mobilize resources so that it can create a real difference on the ground and meet the high expectations of the international community. I would like to assure all members of our full dedication and commitment in that regard.

In concluding my remarks, allow me to make some brief remarks, in my national capacity, on the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund was created to play a catalytic role in attracting new and additional resources. We welcome the fact that pledges to the Fund have now exceeded the original target of $250 million. The Fund is also expected to play a leading role in the immediate response to post-conflict situations. That unique role needs to be further strengthened. At the same time, it is important to improve accountability to donors and the international community. For instance, the selection of countries to be assisted by the Fund should be based upon clearer criteria. The review of the Fund's terms of reference will provide a valuable opportunity to ensure that it can better assist the countries in need.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate on the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund — two tools that were made available to the international community at the Millennium Summit.

I wish first of all to commend the Permanent Representative of Japan, who presides over the work of the Commission with determination and talent. I also salute the representatives of Belgium, Brazil, the Netherlands, Norway, El Salvador and Sweden both for chairing the various configurations of the Commission and for their unremitting efforts to clearly establish the Commission's added value within the United Nations system.

I would also like to welcome the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office and to thank the Secretary-General for his support for that office. My thanks go also to Ms. Carolyn McAskie, who laid the cornerstone of the structure, and Ms. Jane Holl Lute, who took office a month ago and to whom we wish every success.

I have the honour to address the Assembly today on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

It is all the more of an honour to address the Assembly as the theme of post-conflict stabilization is central to the thinking and priorities of the European Union, which has welcomed the solid achievements of the 2005 Summit and the broader goals pursued since that time, in particular the Secretary-General's reflection, initiated at the request of the Security Council, on a more organized, effective and rapid response to post-conflict challenges.

During its second year of work, the Peacebuilding Commission has made promising progress. The attention the international community focuses on the countries on its agenda has increased. The implementation of the peacebuilding strategies for Burundi and Sierra Leone — the first two countries on the agenda — continues to be based on a clearly

defined programme of work for the months ahead. On the ground, coordination has been strengthened. Various national political actors, civil society, partners and donors are discussing together practical ways to implement a common road map.

In that context, it is necessary to enhance the Peacebuilding Commission's visibility and its ability to drive and to influence others. It is noteworthy in that regard that countries that would clearly benefit from engaging with the Commission are reluctant to do so. Outreach efforts are needed, aimed at regional organizations in particular. The Commission might consider holding some of its meetings outside New York.

When speaking of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, it is important to remember that the issue is not just one of financial resources and that the Commission's vocation is not to become a new distributor of development assistance. All energies and resources should be mobilized; here I am thinking in particular the role of the diasporas. But it is true that in many cases, the key is to widen the circle of States and organizations supporting the efforts of the countries on the Commission's agenda. A particularly good example is the Central African Republic, where the Commission has an opportunity to develop mechanisms to ensure adequate mobilization of the international community.

The European Union would like to offer a few suggestions for the coming year on the focus of the Commission's work. First, we must encourage the efforts of the Peacebuilding Support Office to strengthen its capacity to act in support of the Commission. Secondly, the Commission should improve its working methods to become more effective and more strategic, especially in view of the possible inclusion of new countries on its agenda. Some instruments were developed last year. Today, the Commission needs fewer, but better prepared meetings. We must not hesitate to call on the coordination mechanism of the most committed States, such as the International Contact Group, on Guinea-Bissau for example. Moreover, we must work on identifying entry points for the Commission's engagement progressive reduction and conclusion. The Commission should discuss that with the Economic and Social Council.

Ultimately, the consolidation work of the Peacebuilding Commission should be integrated into Security Council strategies as expeditiously as possible. Similarly, the Commission must persuade the development stakeholders to bring their actions into line with a strategy of political and security stabilization by supporting overall efforts to enhance the coherence of the Organization as a whole.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The EU is firmly committed to supporting the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission and endorses the priorities that Ambassador Takasu has just proposed. The European Commission is actively engaged in all the countries on the Commission's agenda. The EU is one of the Commission's principal donors, if not the main one, in terms of budget, humanitarian and development assistance. It also participates in the development of peacebuilding strategies. Lastly, we must not forget that the EU can also support the implementation of the political and security parts of those strategies, particularly through the instruments of the European Security and Defence Policy, such as the Mission in Support of Security Sector Reform in Guinea-Bissau.

The EU notes that the international financial institutions are not lagging behind and have begun to adjust their instruments, as are regional and subregional actors, especially the African Union. The United Nations system is demonstrating thereby its ability to be more committed and ready to align itself with the strategies defined by the Commission.

Finally, I would like to return to the Peacebuilding Fund to which the States members of the EU individually have greatly contributed. The Fund is at the Secretary-General's disposal, but it is up to the Assembly to provide it with guidance. In that regard, the EU looks forward to the review by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the recommendations of the Advisory Group. The Fund is an instrument to address the specific challenges of post-conflict stabilization and recovery that has not yet demonstrated its full potential.

For the EU, the priority is to improve the efficiency of its management and its ability to produce quick results on the ground, acting as a catalyst for other financial mechanisms of the United Nations system. To do that, it will no doubt be necessary to clarify the scope and criteria of its three windows. The general issue of responsibility is crucial to keeping the

Fund afloat in the future. We are ready forthwith to study the ways and means for the General Assembly to further improve the Fund's management.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): As coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) caucus in the Peacebuilding Commission, I am deeply honoured to address this Assembly on behalf of the Movement. I am particularly pleased and encouraged by the commitment shown and the continued valuable contributions of members of the Movement to the ongoing work of the Commission.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the second report of the Peacebuilding Commission, as reflected in document A/63/92, and considers it to be an accurate account of the activities of the Commission over the period. I would like to say, too, that we also welcome the very informative and comprehensive report presented by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Movement also welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund, contained in document A/63/218.

Last year, when we adopted the first report, the Commission was embarking upon unfamiliar territory. Twelve months later, NAM is of the view that the Peacebuilding Commission is confidently on its way to making the solid contribution envisioned by the founding mandate, which emerged from the 2005 United Nations institutional reform package. NAM considers that the advancements made in the period under review points the Commission in the right direction.

The Movement was particularly pleased with the programme of work established by the Commission, especially efforts geared towards the fulfilment of its mandate. Pivotal in that regard were efforts made to accentuate the marshalling of resources and a genuine desire and commitment on the part of members of the Commission and other key players to enhance coordination of all peacebuilding activities on the ground in the countries on the Commission's agenda.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the adoption of the Strategic Frameworks for Peacebuilding in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. Each Framework is a document that describes the Commission's engagement with the respective Governments and their partners. The principle of national ownership of the peacebuilding process by the Governments of the countries on the Commission's agenda — a priority for the Movement — was a central feature of the work of the Commission and in the development of each Framework.

The establishment of the monitoring and tracking mechanisms to check the progress of the implementation of the Frameworks is an indication of the commitment of the respective Governments, the Peacebuilding Commission and other stakeholders to success in the short and medium terms. The monitoring and tracking mechanisms will act as a tool to ensure that agreed targets are met and that the appropriate remedial action is taken, if and when such action becomes necessary.

In that context, the Movement welcomes the decision by the Commission to finance field missions to the countries on the Commission's agenda, the purpose of which is to equip the Commission with first-hand information to produce accurate analysis, with a view to assisting the decision-making process regarding the situations in those countries.

The addition of Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic to the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, at their request, should count among the Commission's highlights and achievements during the period under review. The impressive work already undertaken by the Commission with the new countries in such a short period of time demonstrates that lessons learned from the Commission's engagement with the first two countries on its agenda now form a fundamental basis for effective interaction and development of Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies between the Commission, the authorities of those countries and other key stakeholders and partners.

Despite the tremendous success of the Peacebuilding Commission, much obviously needs to be done to ensure that the overall gains are not eroded by instability or, in a worse-case scenario, a relapse into conflict. The Movement believes that one possible source of such a threat could come from the strict demands for peacebuilding strategies to be developed before Commission funds are allocated and that funds be linked to political commitments. That could backfire and severely hamper and undermine efforts towards consolidating the fragile peace process in those societies.

In addition, the Non-Aligned Movement continues to call for urgent and greater focus to be placed on the development agenda of the countries on

the Commission's agenda. The Movement is convinced that a focus on the development dimension will provide the sustained peace dividend necessary to galvanize support, bolster confidence and strengthen the peacebuilding process over a sustained and extended period.

NAM hereby encourages the Commission to consider the utilization of the diverse experience of countries within the membership of the Peacebuilding Commission to assist in the restructuring, upgrading and improvement of areas crucial to development: education and training, rural agricultural development, and capacity-building. Such assistance could be in the form of specific bilateral arrangements.

NAM underlines the importance of the relations and coherence between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund and advocates closer strategic ties between them in furtherance of the aim of a coordinated approach to the work of the Commission and, most importantly, to provide appropriate funding at critical moments. In that connection, the Movement looks forward to the total involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission in the General Assembly's review of the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund in the not-too-distant future.

The Movement is appreciative of the confidence shown in the Peacebuilding Commission, and the Peacebuilding Fund in particular, as reflected in the recorded pledges which have exceeded the original target of the Fund. As the Commission becomes adept at fulfilling its mandate, so too will the demand for additional funding for peacebuilding projects. In that connection, the Movement takes this opportunity to call for the doubling of the target of the Fund to $500 million, in anticipation of that demand, and to prepare the Commission to be in a position to respond adequately to needs.

In looking ahead, NAM considers the upcoming review of the overall work and the processes of the Commission to be of crucial importance, as it will determine to a large extent how the Peacebuilding Commission conducts much of its work in the future. The Commission will need to ensure that best practices are further developed and maintained and that the provision of integrated peacebuilding strategies is tailored to fit each specific case. Additionally, the Commission will need to guarantee that collaboration and outreach with the main organs of the United Nations become standard practice and that the Organizational Committee finds its niche as the focal point of this body.

The matter of delays in the allocation of seats among the regional groups for the election of members of the Organizational Committee remains a matter of serious concern. The Movement believes that a permanent long-term solution is the only answer to what could become a hindrance and therefore curtail the important work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Movement urges a quick resolution of that problem.

Finally, the Non-Aligned Movement takes this opportunity to congratulate the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission on his leadership over the period. Permit me also to express our appreciation for work undertaken by the respective Chairs of country-specific meetings, particularly to Brazil and Belgium, the recent Chairs of the country-specific configurations of Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic.

Kindly permit me also to express NAM's sincere appreciation to the Peacebuilding Support Office for its excellent contributions during the session, without which the good work of the Peacebuilding Commission would not have been possible at all.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The effective settlement of conflicts, lasting peace and sustainable development can be only achieved through coherence and a comprehensive strategic approach. It is precisely in that regard that Russia sees the key task of the Peacebuilding Commission, which has been designed to promote the enhancement of coordination and efficiency of international assistance supported by the United Nations, international financial institutions and the world donor community to countries emerging from crisis.

We take a positive view of the second year of the Commission's work. That organ possesses considerable potential and will likely become a key international instrument in the realm of coordinating peacebuilding activities. We particularly point to the role of the Peacebuilding Commission, in close cooperation with the Governments on its agenda, in identifying priorities of peacebuilding, determining gaps in existing international assistance mechanisms, and mobilizing necessary donor resources.

The Commission has made significant progress in its country-specific configurations. Together with the Governments of Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, Strategic Frameworks for Peacebuilding have been developed and adopted. In Burundi and Sierra Leone, the first biannual progress reviews have been carried out in priority areas of peacebuilding. The Commission has started to define peacebuilding priorities in the Central African Republic.

At the present stage, we see the main task of the Peacebuilding Commission to be the achievement of real progress at the country level through the coordinated implementation of peacebuilding strategies and monitoring and tracking mechanisms under the leadership of the recipient countries.

It is our belief that all peacebuilding activity must be based on a broad national dialogue among all political forces. We believe that the great merit of the Peacebuilding Commission lies precisely in the establishment of direct dialogue with national Governments, ensuring their national ownership and responsibility for peacebuilding processes.

We believe that the Commission should further enhance the coordination and effectiveness of the peacebuilding activities of the international community. In the coming year, it should continue to work on strengthening functional links with international financial institutions, regional organizations and the donor community in order to mobilize donor resources more effectively.

Additional attention needs to be paid to improving cooperation in the field with all peacebuilding actors in peacebuilding processes and to harmonizing the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Commission with the existing coordination mechanisms, primarily within the United Nations system. Such cooperation with United Nations institutions, particularly in the field, should not undermine existing operational activities of the Organization, but rather strengthen them.

It is particularly important to strengthen the organic link between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council, primarily in regard to common issues on their agendas. It is important to ensure the timely exchange of information between the two organs, a clear division of labour and complementarity. Of course, that must be done in parallel with the development of links between the Commission, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

We should like to highlight the important contribution of the Peacebuilding Support Office to the work of the Commission. We welcome the appointment of a new head of the Office, Ms. Jane Holl Lute. We hope that enhanced management and accountability of the Peacebuilding Fund will be among its priorities.

We support the focus of the work of the Fund on providing assistance to countries at the earliest stages of their emergence from conflict, and note its role as a stimulus in mobilizing more sustainable mechanisms in supporting of post-conflict recovery processes.

At the same time, we believe the time has come for a review of the terms of reference of the Fund and in that regard we await the proposals of the Secretariat. We would like to stress the importance of improving the assessment of peacebuilding needs, the soundness of the financial basis of projects, the establishment of implementation mechanisms and accountability. We want to see clarity, transparency and openness in the criteria for accessing its resources.

A clear manifestation of our support of the Peacebuilding Fund is the decision of the Russian Government to contribute $2 million annually. We expect that those funds will contribute to a real strengthening of the potential of the Fund in the areas I have mentioned.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): Since its inception in 2006, the Peacebuilding Commission has made substantial progress in assisting countries emerging from conflict. Brazil welcomes the annual report of the Commission presented by Ambassador Yukio Takasu, which provides an account of the numerous activities undertaken during the Commission's second year. The Commission has demonstrated its added value and is now consolidating its institutional niche within the United Nations system. I would like to praise the excellent work of Ambassador Takasu in leading us in this process.

The Commission has been able to adopt three Strategic Frameworks for Peacebuilding in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. Those Strategies provide a valuable instrument for identifying challenges critical to the consolidation of peace, coordinating partners on the ground, raising awareness

of peacebuilding priorities and marshalling additional resources.

We welcome the beginning of the consideration of the fourth country on the Commission's agenda, the Central African Republic, under the chairmanship of Belgium. Brazil has always endorsed the view that the Commission should be ready to grow, take up new countries on its agenda and evolve as an important advisory body for post-conflict situations. Brazil also appreciates the work of Ambassador Carmen María Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador, Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned. The Group has been useful in promoting thematic discussions on matters of relevance to peacebuilding.

We welcome the initiative of holding strategic policy discussions in the Organizational Committee, a forum that could play a role in defining broad strategic guidelines for the Commission by promoting an inclusive dialogue on key aspects of peacebuilding. In particular, the debate on the participation of the private sector in peacebuilding activities, led by Indonesia, was an interesting and innovative exercise that will guide our efforts to persuade companies and foundations to play a more active role in peacebuilding activities.

The field trips undertaken by the Commission's members to the countries on its agenda are an invaluable tool for obtaining first-hand information about the situation on the ground and for maintaining a fruitful dialogue with local authorities, international partners and civil society. Brazil fully supports the continuity of that practice in the future. The Peacebuilding Support Office should be granted the necessary resources for organizing and supporting such missions.

Reaching out to institutions outside the United Nations system is important to ensure a coordinated and coherent response to peacebuilding challenges. Brazil is particularly pleased to note the growing interaction with the Bretton Woods institutions, the participation of which in the Commission's discussions has certainly contributed to our work. By the same token, it is necessary to maintain and enhance the ongoing dialogue with regional organizations, taking into account the regional dimension involved in many peacebuilding-related issues.

We believe that, in Guinea-Bissau and other countries emerging from conflict, the consolidation of peace relies on the triangle of security, the rule of law and economic development. The Strategic Framework adopted by the Guinea-Bissau configuration on 1 October was the result of extensive consultations with local authorities and relevant stakeholders. It highlights the importance of the upcoming legislative elections and recognizes as major priorities the promotion of economic growth and the rehabilitation of infrastructure, in particular in the energy field, security sector reform, justice sector reform, the consolidation of the rule of law, the fight against drug trafficking, public administration reform, and social issues critical to peacebuilding. The Strategic Framework will soon be complemented by a monitoring and review mechanism capable of gauging progress in each of the priority areas.

At the beginning of our work, the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission recommended a first allocation of resources from the Peacebuilding Fund to finance quick-impact projects that could yield immediate peace dividends to the population. Four projects have been set up in the areas of voter registration, youth employment and the rehabilitation of military barracks and prisons. A second and more substantive tranche is expected to be allocated soon.

The so-called two-track approach is proving to be a good innovation. However, the difficulties that currently account for its slow pace in the execution of the Fund's projects — in particular in the case of Guinea-Bissau — are a reminder of the need to strengthen the United Nations presence in countries on the Commission's agenda.

In conclusion, Brazil praises the work done and expects the Commission to continue to make progress in the years to come, thereby contributing to the improvement of the lives of millions of people in countries emerging from conflict.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Peacebuilding Commission for its report on the work of its second session. We also wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report on the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund. We support the relevant conclusions and recommendations contained in the reports. The Chinese delegation wishes to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Takasu, Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his efficient work.

Under his guidance, the Commission has made much headway over the past year.

It has been over two years since the Peacebuilding Commission was formally established. Over the past two years, the Commission, guided by the World Summit Outcome Document, has carried out in earnest its mandate under the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and put into practice the concept of peacebuilding around the globe, bringing hopes for peace and development to the countries and peoples concerned. If the Commission's work in its first year laid the foundation, then its performance in the second year further increased its influence, which can be seen in the following areas.

First, the number of subjects under its consideration has increased. After Burundi and Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic were added to the list, making up a total of four countries on the Commission's agenda. In addition, the Peacebuilding Fund is currently providing financial support to nine countries. It is fair to say that the expansion of the scope of work of the Commission and the Fund is both appropriate and efficient.

Secondly, the Commission has enhanced its ties with stakeholders inside and outside the United Nations by keeping lines of communication open with the main organs, including the Secretariat, and by strengthening links with the Bretton Woods institutions, regional organizations such as the African Union, the private sector and civil society.

Thirdly, it has increased its influence on the ground by sending missions to Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, demonstrating its resolve and commitment to peacebuilding. In formulating integrated peacebuilding strategies, the Commission invited the participation of representatives of all parties to hear a wide range of views. It provided timely financial support to Sierra Leone for its general and local elections and has been following the Burundi peace process closely.

Those achievements notwithstanding, the Peacebuilding Commission still faces internal and external challenges. Externally, the continuous turbulence of hotspot issues, the worsening global economic imbalance, the food crisis, a shortage of resources, frequent natural disasters and rampant epidemics have posed grave global challenges, particularly for countries and peoples at the lowest level of development. Internally, as a newly established body, the Commission still has a great deal of work to do in terms of improving its mechanism and rationalizing its structure.

With only two years to go before the 2010 evaluation of the Peacebuilding Commission, reality does not allow us to take a long pause for reflection. No time should be lost in further improving the Commission's work. China has every confidence in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. I wish to make the following suggestions for further improving its work.

First, coordination with other agencies must be enhanced and the Commission's unique advantages brought into play. In the face of ever-growing challenges, we must act in a collective manner. In some areas of peacebuilding, other United Nations agencies, the Bretton Woods system, such regional organizations as the European Union and the African Union, and bilateral assistance partners have already done a great deal of work and accumulated rich experience. The Peacebuilding Commission should maximize its coordinating role and seek to strengthen coordination among development mechanisms. In those areas where there has been less investment, the Peacebuilding Commission should use its advantages and play an active role by inviting the relevant parties to join the peacebuilding process. We should map out the use of resources more effectively and increase the impact of peacebuilding through coordination and cooperation.

Secondly, we should strengthen the partnerships with the countries concerned so as to bring their initiative fully into play. The countries concerned bear the primary responsibility for their own peacebuilding. Ultimately, the goal of peacebuilding is to build a peaceful and stable national system and, in peacebuilding, the local people are both the primary force to be relied upon as well as the biggest beneficiaries. We should have confidence in the local people and rely on local Governments, encouraging them to bring their wisdom into play and take part in the formulation of reconstruction plans so that they will devote themselves to the cause of peacebuilding with a sense of responsibility and ownership.

Thirdly, we should strengthen the Peacebuilding Commission's institution-building capacity and address various internal issues appropriately. We hope that Peacebuilding Commission members will strengthen

consultation, take each other's interests into account and appropriately address the question of member turnover. We expect the Peacebuilding Commission to streamline meetings, enhance efficiency, avoid formalities and ensure the quality of meetings. We are fully aware of the fact that there are differing views among Peacebuilding Commission members on the concept of peacebuilding and its priorities. We hope that members will enhance their exchange of views, increase mutual understanding and take divergent concerns into consideration.

With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund, in general the Chinese delegation is happy with its financing and operations. As a new financing mechanism, the Peacebuilding Fund is of great significance to initiating the relevant peacebuilding programmes. Its operation over the past two years has given an initial demonstration of its key catalyst role. In its future work, we hope that the secretariat of the Fund will continue to provide regular briefings to donors and the Peacebuilding Commission on the Fund's operations. We ask the management to expedite the allocation of financial resources and hope that the Secretary-General will strengthen the impact appraisal and accountability for projects. The Chinese Government will as always support the work of the Peacebuilding Fund.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to set out Peru's general view on post-conflict processes. I will begin by referring to national ownership of the peacebuilding process.

For Peru, each conflict has its own internal and international dynamics. In spite of the similarity of underlying economic or social factors, there are unique ethnic, tribal, constitutional or historical identities that ensure that no two cases are the same. Thus, in order to deal more effectively with post-conflict processes, we must recognize the particular circumstances of each case and not follow a single format. That is why my delegation considers the flexibility in the national configurations identified in the Peacebuilding Commission's report to be a key element of the progress achieved.

Secondly, my delegation believes that international actors should be aware that genuine ownership of the transition and peacebuilding processes will be more sustainable if those processes are carried out with the major social legitimacy fostered by a participatory approach. In addition celebrating political elections, we must verify practices, rules and institutions in order to achieve and implement agreements and settle disputes. That will make it possible to gradually extend State jurisdiction, affirm legitimate authority with the right to use force, consolidate central territorial control through reformed security institutions, define policies to provide public services, administer natural resources, encourage investment, and increase budgets with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency. As basic obligations, the rule of law must be respected and human rights protected.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/63/218) correctly considers Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies to be a central element of these two years of work in the post-conflict architecture. We also believe that field visits have served as a catalyst for concerted work within the States concerned.

From the outset, international cooperation should be devoted primarily to strengthening the political and conflict-resolution systems and the training of civilian professional officers. At the same time, we must emphasize that rapid-impact projects play a prominent role in raising awareness and garnering support among the local population. The participation of international financial institutions and local and international businesses is essential to the success of the process. We highlight the establishment of the task force on the role of the private sector in post-conflict situations, which addresses aspects of microfinance, remittances and associations with private foundations. We also encourage the task force to continue its work in relation to productive post-conflict investment.

It can be seen throughout the report that the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, Fund and Support Office calls for a medium- and long-term commitment backed by a strategic vision. That means that participation of the international community may, in agreement with the State concerned, extend for several years, over multiple priority areas and, in some cases, to great depth.

For those countries currently on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission or benefiting from the Peacebuilding Fund, it must always be clear that the cooperation and international assistance they receive are subject to the measurement of progress indicators in a context that supports the exercise of their

sovereignty, and in full respect for international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In terms of synergy with regional or international bodies and with institutions of the United Nations system, a long-term commitment requires the convergence of action and additional coordination efforts. The leadership of the United Nations guarantees legitimacy, transparency, coordination and adequate follow-up in the reconstruction process. To that end, we must ensure that our Organization has the capacity to analyse, evaluate, plan and coordinate among its major bodies in order to react to sudden changes on the ground that may jeopardize the peacebuilding process, and to make the resultant necessary adjustments.

The report of the Secretary-General provides a description of the current situation and progress made, as well as an overview of lessons learned, from which we can derive ideas for improving the work of our Organization, its bodies, funds and programmes to achieve more concerted action in that area.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate its support for the work done by the Peacebuilding Commission and commend the leadership of its president, Ambassador Takasu of Japan. We encourage the Commission to continue contributing to peacebuilding in the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Burundi and other States that may request it.

Peru is a candidate for the Peacebuilding Commission in the elections to be held in 2009 and offers those ideas as a foretaste of the contribution that it hopes to make once the problem of the current regional underrepresentation is satisfactorily resolved for Latin America.

Mr. Punkrasin (Thailand): In the general debate at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly last week, Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to peace, freedom and tolerance, because they are part of our national character. The overarching principle of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. Over the years, however, we have seen that, despite the greatest efforts of the United Nations, there have been some devastating setbacks in that regard. I am referring to situations of countries in the aftermath of conflict. As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointed out three years ago, half of all countries that emerge from war relapse into violence within five years. The fact is that, beyond peacekeeping, there is a critical need to build peace — one that is sustainable, one that lasts.

Two years ago, Thailand fully supported the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations new intergovernmental advisory body. The Commission was created to help fill the institutional gap at the United Nations in assisting post-conflict countries to address their peacebuilding challenges. Although the Commission is a newcomer to the United Nations family, within the course of just two years its role has proved invaluable, particularly in serving as a bridge between stakeholders in the peacebuilding process and between various stakeholders, such as United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donor countries, and the countries on its agenda, namely, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic, so that resources can be mobilized and secured for peacebuilding projects in those countries.

Thailand would like to take this opportunity to commend the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund for keeping Member States informed of their activities and the progress they have made on the ground. We are of the view that the Commission must continue to develop and improve its interaction and cooperation with the Fund, other organs and agencies in the United Nations system and all Member States. For effective concrete results, it is essential that the Commission and other bodies strive to work together to achieve coherence and close coordination in terms of policy and operations.

More importantly, the peacebuilding process must put strong emphasis on the principle of national ownership and participation. While the Commission helps the countries rebuild and strengthen themselves, it is the countries that have primary responsibility in making that work and endure, so that they can eventually stand on their own in the long run. The sense of ownership also signifies that the peacebuilding process must be adjusted to respond to the unique conditions, real needs and situations on the ground of the countries. The framework and strategy for peacebuilding should, therefore, be formulated in collaboration between the Commission and the countries by taking into account that complexity. A one-size-fits-all approach cannot be applied in that regard.

Thailand attaches great importance to the peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations. We also believe that sustainable peace must have its foundations in development. Through the development of political, economic and social systems and infrastructure the post-conflict peacebuilding process can bring about lasting peace, especially in those countries where United Nations peacekeeping forces have just completed their mandates. The role of civilians, the private sector and civil society in the peacebuilding process should also be supported and promoted.

Thailand has a firm policy of supporting United Nations peace operations and we have consistently participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Besides their peacekeeping role, Thai military and police personnel have also contributed to building peace and laying foundations in several countries emerging from conflict, particularly in the areas of development, security sector reform and the rule of law.

Just last month, Thailand and the United States co-organized the Association of South-East Asian Nations Regional Forum workshop in Bangkok on stabilization and reconstruction. It provided an opportunity for member countries of the Forum to exchange their ideas and experiences on the effective stabilization and reconstruction measures that help maintain the stability of countries affected by conflict and natural disasters.

With our experience, expertise and conviction, Thailand is confident that we can contribute to the peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict areas through the development schemes of the United Nations. Therefore, Thailand has presented its candidature for membership in the Commission for 2009 to 2011 in the General Assembly category. With the endorsement of the Asian Group, we hope to join the Commission soon.

Thailand is pleased that the Peacebuilding Fund has surpassed its target of $250 million of contributions. We believe that, working in collaboration with the Commission, the Fund will be even more beneficial to countries in need of sustainable peace. Since the establishment of the Fund, Thailand has contributed $10,000 and will contribute more this year.

As the Commission enters its third year of activities, there is no doubt that more difficult challenges lie ahead. Thailand is ready to lend its full support to the Commission, and to the United Nations as a whole, in its endeavours to create sustainable peace throughout the world.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to express my appreciation to the Peacebuilding Commission for its report (A/63/92) and to the Secretary-General for his report (A/63/218 and Corr.1) on the Peacebuilding Fund. Egypt aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Egypt believes in the important role played by the Commission in preventing post-conflict countries from relapsing into conflicts. That is why, it has sought to join the Commission since its establishment in order, to participate efficiently in all its meetings and activities and work on helping the Commission to implement its tasks, enshrined in General Assembly resolution 60/180.

Since its establishment in 2005, the Commission has achieved great progress in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, as well as its current work on behalf of the Central African Republic. Those achievements impose on us an obligation to double our efforts and present new ideas and proposals to enhance the performance of the Commission, to make it more efficient in dealing with the situations in the countries under its consideration and more capable of adding to its agenda additional countries that may request the assistance of the Commission.

In that regard, I would like to highlight some of the practical points that Egypt thinks should be taken into consideration.

First, the Commission should promote adherence to the principle of national ownership in all stages of its work. That principle should be applied starting with the request for the Commission's assistance and onto identifying and implementing the peacebuilding priorities and terminating its work, particularly since that principle enhances the trust of the concerned countries and consolidates the cooperation of the national authorities with the Commission on the governmental, parliamentarian and public levels.

Second, the Commission's ongoing efforts to function efficiently require it to continue strengthening

its relations with various relevant United Nations organs, departments and programmes, as well as with the international financial institutions, donor countries and regional and subregional organizations concerned with peacebuilding, particularly those in the same regions as the countries under the Commission's consideration.

While I thank the Chairman of the Commission and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations of the four countries for their work to that end, there remains a compelling need for the Commission to promote its institutional relations with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Those relations need further delineation and clarification in order to promote full respect for the institutional balance between those organs, in accordance with the jurisdiction of each under the Charter, and to prevent the encroachment of any principal organ upon the jurisdictions of the others.

In that context, I request the General Assembly to assume a more active role in monitoring and directing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission by convening regular sessions to review its activities, evaluate the conclusions of its field visits, and find ways to support it, along the lines of the periodic meetings convened by the Security Council to that end.

Third, the diversity of the categories of membership of the Peacebuilding Commission should be exploited to maximum benefit. Resolution 60/180 states that the composition of the Commission shall comprise representatives of the top contributors to peacekeeping operations and the United Nations budget and members of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. From its very inception, the Commission was intended to benefit from the diverse nature and experience of all those categories in a way that would assist it in its work. However, practical experience has shown that the Commission has not benefited as desired from its members' affiliation with those categories. Egypt would therefore propose that the Commission discuss that important issue at its coming session to consider ways to make full use of the diversity of its membership.

Fourth, it is important that the Commission benefit from the lessons learned with respect to its working methods and provisional rules of procedure so that they may be taken into account in the 2010 review process. In that regard, I would refer to the method of applying the concept of fair geographical distribution. In stressing the need for the President of the General Assembly to make further efforts to resolve that issue, Egypt, in its capacity as coordinator of the African Group on peacebuilding issues, asserts that the solution must not lead to a decrease in the number of seats allocated to Africa from the seven already allocated in all categories. I also affirm that if there is any increase in the number of seats allocated to any other regional group, Africa should be given an extra seat or seats in addition to the seven currently allocated to it.

Fifth, it is important to promote the role of the Commission in setting a balance between donor and non-donor countries in peacebuilding activities. In that regard, I refer to the role of the steering committees in the countries under consideration in identifying projects to be financed by the Peacebuilding Fund. I stress that the steering committees are not competent to make financial decisions or to direct the Secretary-General to provide financing. That jurisdiction falls exclusively to the Commission, particularly given the limited membership of the steering committees, which include only the donor countries and the Secretariat but exclude non-donor States members of the Commission.

Sixth, it is necessary to prepare a strategy that allows civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to participate in various fields related to peacebuilding, in coordination with and upon approval of the countries under consideration and with the aim of marshalling all efforts.

Seventh, the General Assembly should also lend its full support to the Peacebuilding Support Office and provide it with the posts and financial resources necessary to fulfil its role thoroughly. The General Assembly should provide the necessary funds from the budget of the Organization for two annual field trips by the Commission to each of the countries on its agenda, with the participation of representatives from all regional groups. That would promote direct contact between the members of the Commission and the national authorities in the countries under consideration.

The relation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund is considered to be among the most important issues that will be taken up in the coming phase, particularly in the context of reviewing the Fund's terms of reference. We

commend the increasing international support for the activities of the Fund, as reflected in the $238.5 million of pledged financing deposited in its accounts. Through peacebuilding strategies and the emergency window, that money has financed 37 projects in nine countries since the Fund was established.

While Egypt agrees with the report with respect to the steps taken to review the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund, it confirms its support for any effort that would contribute to developing the work of the Fund, improve coordination and coherence between its activities and the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission, and enhance its ability to work expeditiously and efficiently, particularly in disbursing the funds allocated to specific projects in the countries under the Commission's consideration. Egypt also supports the proposal in the report to expand the membership of the Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group, given its vital oversight of the Fund's activities. Egypt also supports the proposal to direct Peacebuilding Fund support for the activities of regional and subregional organizations in the fields of peacebuilding. Egypt reiterates its proposal that an annual donor conference be held to ensure the necessary financial support for the budget of the Fund.

Moreover, Egypt proposes that the review process consider increasing the funding target of the Peacebuilding Fund to make it capable of financing bigger projects and to enhance consultation and coordination between the Secretary-General and the Commission when the former believes that a particular country is eligible to receive financing from the Fund, in order to prevent duplication and rationalize expenditures.

In conclusion, we thank the Permanent Representative of Japan for his distinguished presidency of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Permanent Representatives of Belgium, Brazil, El Salvador, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden for their valuable guidance of the Commission's work. I also thank the Peacebuilding Support Office for its strenuous efforts over the past year and wish its new leadership every success.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): May I join those colleagues who have thanked the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important debate today. It offers a useful opportunity to take stock of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund and to charter the challenges we still face. Those challenges include how we can improve our support to countries in the early stages of their emergence from conflict.

I would like to align myself with the statement made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

It is important to celebrate success, so I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador Takasu for his dedicated chairing of the Organizational Committee, and the Permanent Representatives of the Netherlands, Norway and Brazil for the achievements made on Sierra Leone, Burundi and Guinea-Bissau. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of El Salvador for her leadership on lessons learned and the Permanent Representative of Indonesia for championing work on the Peacebuilding Commission's engagement with the private sector.

In addition, I would like to welcome Sweden in taking over the chair of the country-specific configuration for Burundi, and Belgium in taking up responsibilities for the Central Africa Republic.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the support that Carolyn McAskie provided in getting the Peacebuilding Commission up and running and to welcome the appointment of Jane Holl Lute as her successor.

In last year's debate I highlighted the need for the Commission to give more focus to how it could provide added value to the peacebuilding processes in the countries on its agenda. The primary impact of the Commission lies, of course, in helping to address the political barriers to peacebuilding and bringing coherence to the international community's efforts.

The United Kingdom shares others' assessments of how well the Peacebuilding Commission has taken up this challenge, but it is also true, as many speakers have noted, that there remain a number of challenges. I would like to highlight five of those challenges as we see them today.

Firstly, the Commission needs to be better at measuring its impact. We need to live up to our commitments, including mobilizing resources. But as the first biannual reviews demonstrated, we currently do not have the means to quantify what additional resources have actually been mobilized.

Secondly, the Commission needs to be more specific. We need to get much better at identifying what are the actual, critical gaps in funding and setting out tangible benchmarks on how frameworks should be implemented. Our ability to mobilize resources will improve if we can specifically state what is required and how those resources would be best channelled. We need to ensure that sufficient investment is made in analysis and monitoring and that the United Nations system is providing the Peacebuilding Support Office the requisite inputs to achieve this.

Thirdly, the Commission needs to be more efficient. With new countries on the Commission's agenda, this is particularly important. We should focus on fewer, but more strategic meetings in New York, with most of the day-to-day work being led in the countries themselves.

Fourthly, the Commission needs to be more flexible and agile. We need to make sure the Commission's engagement adapts to the changing realities on the ground, such as the new threat posed by fuel and food prices. We also need to make sure that the Commission is not formulaic when it approaches each new country, but that it tailors its engagement to the challenges faced with each new context. In this vein, we have found the approach adopted for the Central African Republic very encouraging.

Fifthly, the work of the Commission needs to be better aligned and more inclusive. Governments clearly lead the process. But if we want long-lasting success, all sectors of society need to be involved to ensure this. Success is also more likely if steps are made to prevent uncoordinated donor programmes that pull Governments in several directions at once.

The Peacebuilding Commission needs to ensure that the international community is a more responsible partner to the Government and that political, security, recovery and development engagement is all better integrated.

In going forward this year, we need to consider whether the new peacebuilding architecture is filling the gaps we set it up to fill. It has demonstrated that it can play a useful role in countries once United Nations peacekeeping missions have drawn down. But as the 20 May Security Council debate on post-conflict peacebuilding highlighted, the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund also have a potentially critical role to play in countries emerging from conflict.

At that debate, my Foreign Secretary stated that the challenge faced is to tackle the current statistic in which 30 per cent of conflicts break out again with five years of a peace agreement.

The critical gaps that were highlighted at that debate are: better international leadership to ensure a common strategy that can drive forward integrated political, security and development activities all in support of national efforts; increased national and international civilian capacities to plan and implement stabilization and recovery efforts; and faster, more flexible funding.

Recent meetings in London and Copenhagen have also highlighted the importance of improving the international community's support to conflict-affected countries in the very early stages of peacebuilding.

In the case of funding, the Peacebuilding Fund has the potential to fill the current gap in the provision of timely, flexible and predictable funding to countries emerging from conflict. Indeed, it was set up to support early peacebuilding efforts but has, in reality, primarily supported later-stage peacebuilding.

We hope the Office of Internal Oversight Services evaluation report will put forward concrete recommendations on how to enable the Peacebuilding Fund to provide support earlier in the process. And the upcoming review of the Fund's terms of reference will provide a good opportunity to make the Peacebuilding Fund more effective and responsive.

It is important that the Peacebuilding Commission engages with this process and feeds into the Secretary-General's report on how the United Nations can improve its support to early recovery. The desire of the membership to have that engagement from the Peacebuilding Commission was something that my country and my Foreign Secretary took away very strongly from the 20 May debate and we hope that we can react to that.

The United Kingdom remains committed to the Peacebuilding Commission and we look forward to our continued close engagement with colleagues in the coming year.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): My delegation wishes to thank the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding

Commission, Ambassador Takasu, for presenting the annual report of the Commission (A/63/92-S/2008/417) and also to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his annual report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218-S/2008/522).

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We believe the Peacebuilding Commission report contains a fair assessment of the activities of the Commission during its second session, i.e. how far we have come and what remains to be done. From a comparative analysis of the present report and the previous one, we may reasonably conclude that so far so good, but we dare not underestimate the challenges ahead.

Today's debate offers us a unique opportunity to critically examine where our collective peacebuilding efforts may have fallen short of expectations, reflect on what we could have done better and think through creative ways of consolidating the gains we have made.

There have been noticeable successes in Sierra Leone and Burundi. Lessons learnt in those two countries have certainly improved our approach to handling the cases of Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic.

My delegation is pleased with the early adoption of the integrated Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau and look forward to working with the Chair and members of that configuration towards the attainment of the objectives and priorities spelt out in the framework, including ensuring the success of the forthcoming elections in Guinea-Bissau.

While recognizing the importance of the cardinal principles of national ownership and international partnership, my delegation would like to reemphasize that an all-inclusive peacebuilding paradigm requires the Peacebuilding Commission to actively mobilize the support of regional and subregional organizations and civil society, among other stakeholders, in post-conflict reconstruction.

The Peacebuilding Commission is certainly taking shape, allowing it to devote more attention to issues of substance instead of procedure. But it is essential to keep our working methods under constant review to make us work smarter and better and to develop a strategic vision for the future of the Commission, so that we are not overtaken by events.

In this regard, we appreciate the fact that with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Commission has adopted proactive tools such as the monitoring and tracking mechanisms, videoconferencing, mapping of resources and the setting up of integrated country offices and strategic frameworks.

However, our long-term strategic vision will require new tools such as the development of an early warning mechanism. For the foreseeable future, my delegation thinks that the General Assembly, in collaboration with the Security Council and other relevant bodies of the United Nations, should take a strategic decision to strengthen the capacity of the Peacebuilding Commission for preventive diplomacy.

This means that in the medium to long term, the Peacebuilding Commission should be concerned not only about preventing countries currently on its agenda from relapsing into conflict, but also about developing the capacity to anticipate potential conflicts and engaging the international community to address them before they reach crisis proportions.

Some researchers have argued that it takes a minimum of 10 years for peacekeeping to succeed. While we may not be in a position to validate that claim, what we would urge is that peacebuilding and peacekeeping not be viewed as zero-sum games in which the deployment of peacebuilding would necessarily lead to the termination of peacekeeping mandates. We need to strike the right balance between entry and exit strategies, so that peacebuilding operations are neither prematurely terminated nor unduly extended to create a dependency syndrome in the affected country on the agenda.

As the time for a review of the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund draws near, it is appropriate to deepen dialogue among Member States on how to strengthen the institutional links and working relations between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. There is a need to increase the role of the Commission in decisions made by the Fund in allocating resources to beneficiary countries, so as to improve coordination and avert possible duplication of efforts. In the meantime, we welcome the improvement in the lines of communication between the Fund and the Commission and the Fund's effectiveness in raising

more funds than the amount targeted during the period under consideration.

I wish to conclude by recalling the distinguished and pioneering contribution of Ambassador Carolyn McAskie, former Assistant-Secretary-General and head of the Peacebuilding Support Office, in operationalizing the peacebuilding architecture, and to wish her the very best in her future endeavours. My delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome Ms. Jane Holl Lute, new Assistant-Secretary-General and head of the Support Office, who has already demonstrated her commitment to build upon the work of her predecessor, and to assure her of Ghana's full cooperation. Finally, we commend the stewardship of Ambassador Takasu in skilfully guiding the affairs of the Peacebuilding Commission to consolidate the success achieved in the course of its first session. In his statement, Ambassador Takasu appropriately recognized the contributions of the past and present Chairs of the various configurations of the Commission. If their effectiveness is to be enhanced, the Commission and the Support Office must be well resourced.

Finally, Ghana remains committed and ready to support the Peacebuilding Commission in meeting the challenges ahead — some of which have been identified in the report before us and in some of the statements we have heard today — for the sake of solidarity, humanity, peace and security.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): We welcome this debate, which offers a good opportunity to the general membership to take stock of the United Nations peacebuilding agenda, which has assumed increasing priority and prominence ever since the 2005 World Summit.

As reflected in the Peacebuilding Commission's annual report (A/63/92), the new peacebuilding architecture has made appreciable progress, both in further developing system-wide institutional linkages and in promoting substantive work in the countries under consideration. As a member of the Commission, Pakistan is fully committed to its success. We appreciate the contributions of all members of the Commission, in particular the Chairman, the Vice-Chairs and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations. We shall continue to contribute to that collective effort by actively participating in the work of the Commission and by providing assistance to the countries concerned to the best of our ability.

The expansion of the Commission's agenda, which now includes four countries, is an indication of the growing confidence in its work. That has increased expectations — and rightly so — especially those of the Governments and peoples of the countries under consideration. It also entails better organization of the Commission's work, especially increased coherence and prioritization among its various formats and the dedication of appropriate time and resources to the various situations on the agenda.

At the strategic level, the experience gained by the Peacebuilding Commission should guide the development of a common vision of peacebuilding. In our view, the following are the keys to success: first, greater convergence between the perspectives of the partners and the host countries, based primarily on the priorities and the national ownership of the latter; secondly, genuine political will and flexibility on the part of all stakeholders; and thirdly, involvement by the Commission from the initial phase of United Nations engagement in countries emerging from conflict. A comprehensive approach based on interlinkage between peace and development should traverse all stages, from conflict prevention to peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

Sustainable development and the utilization of national capacities are essential to ensure national ownership of peacebuilding priorities. Strategies based on an objective and comprehensive diagnosis of the situation, including the root causes of conflict, are more likely to succeed. Integrated peacebuilding strategies and cooperation frameworks should be living plans of action, under constant review and capable of adjustment as the situation demands. The Commission's monitoring and tracking tools will need to be further refined to ensure identification of new gaps and timely and full implementation of the commitments undertaken by all sides.

It is extremely important to provide resources at the early stages for immediate peacebuilding priorities and quick-impact and other projects with catalytic effect. The utility of the Peacebuilding Fund is clear in that regard. It is important to keep the interests of the recipient countries paramount in the identification, design and prioritization of the projects to be resourced from the Fund. The timely and effective disbursement

of funds is equally important. In our view, increased coordination and coherence between the activities of the Fund and those of the Commission could yield better results in that regard. The Commission's guidance would be extremely relevant in the review process of the terms of reference of the Fund.

In the last analysis, the success of the Commission will be gauged in terms of the concrete results achieved for people on the ground. With a view to effective prevention against relapse, the ultimate objective of peacebuilding should be to enable countries emerging from conflict to stand on their own feet so as to achieve self-sustained peace and development. That involves the fulfilment of commitments by national and international stakeholders and the mobilization of resources, both internal and external. This is where the Commission, because of its unique composition and convening power, has immense potential to deliver. It needs to further strengthen its advocacy role so as to tap all avenues for the marshalling of adequate and predictable resources from the early stages to the extended period of international attention.

Working on both sides, the Commission can also help address the issues of donor restrictions and conditionalities, on the one hand, and absorptive capacity and mechanisms for the effective and transparent disbursement and utilization of resources, on the other. The Commission can also promote the cause of the countries on its agenda more effectively before the international financial institutions, which should be encouraged to show the operational flexibility to address the special circumstances of countries emerging from conflict.

The Commission will also need to focus attention on broader issues, including aid effectiveness, trade, investment, official development assistance, debt relief and development of the private sector. The work facilitated by Indonesia on the role of the private sector should be taken forward. Many countries afflicted by complex conflicts continue to be deprived of revenues and earnings from their own resources, owing to unequal trade regimes, industrial-country agricultural subsidies and the inability to process their own raw materials. Therefore, more attention has to be accorded to national and international mechanisms to halt the illegal exploitation of natural resources and enable the countries concerned to make full use of their resources for the benefit of their own peoples.

The Organizational Committee, the nucleus of the Commission, is best placed to discuss those and several other cross-cutting and thematic issues. It is time to utilize its full potential. It should have strategic oversight over the work of the Commission, including country-specific meetings and the Working Group on Lessons Learned. Energizing the Organizational Committee would also contribute to increased coordination among the stakeholders — in particular the three relevant principal organs — which is so essential for the success of our work.

The challenges of peacebuilding are complex and immense. They require a holistic approach based on sustained political attention and the pooling of necessary resources. The Peacebuilding Commission can deliver only with the full support and commitment of the international community.

In that regard, I would like to conclude on an encouraging note. Notwithstanding the differences of opinion among Member States, the collective objective of bringing tangible benefits to the countries under consideration is becoming a rallying point for the Commission's work.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): I would like to thank the President of the Assembly for organizing this debate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.

Italy endorses the statement of the French presidency of the European Union.

The Commission is now entering its third year of operations. We are beginning to see concrete results: four countries are on the agenda, three integrated strategies have been approved, one is in the making, and monitoring mechanisms have been established. The international community is paying greater attention to peacebuilding efforts.

The work undertaken by the Commission in identifying priority areas in respect of the principle of national ownership is most welcome. National ownership is the necessary foreground for the success of Commission strategies, which also involve international stakeholders, non-governmental organizations and civil society. It is also the foreground for implementation strategies, benchmarks and timelines, the optimization of resources and efforts to avoid the overlapping of programmes.

The Commission has consolidated its status and credibility. Countries that need assistance with their stabilization processes are aware of its resources. The international financial institutions are now fully involved in the Commission's deliberations.

It is time to move forward, addressing new challenges in a creative and flexible way. Peace processes must be seen as a whole. Peacekeeping missions should be fully coherent with peacebuilding strategies. Therefore, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and the Peacebuilding Support Office should be encouraged to improve their integrated planning processes.

On the other hand, the Commission could further enhance its role by aiming for more effective dialogue and coordination among all stakeholders, including, in particular, regional and subregional organizations. We see four main challenges for the Commission in the coming months: first, it must translate the integrated strategies into concrete action; secondly, it must mold its fieldwork to local needs; thirdly, it must give stakeholders the opportunity to become more involved; and fourthly, it must assess its added value in bridging the existing gaps in the stabilization process. The Commission has to adapt its work to different contexts in order to assure the proper links between security, development and respect for human rights.

Turning now to the Peacebuilding Fund, the second report sheds greater light on the role, value and general constraints of that financial instrument within the framework of United Nations peace consolidation efforts. We look positively on the fact that, in its second year of operations, the Fund has been more dynamic in identifying beneficiary countries and needs for intervention. The Fund has also focused more on improving analytical capacities and planning, on enhancing coordination with the United Nations offices in New York and in the field, and on greater interaction with the Commission.

However, the Fund has not yet developed its full potential. It has not provided the immediate post-conflict response that we had hoped for. There is clearly a need to tackle strategy and management issues, such as the criteria for selecting beneficiary countries, the time frame for drafting and approving projects, local Governments' financial and institutional absorption capability, countries' eligibility for the various windows and the Fund's mobilizing force.

We would thus like to offer a few suggestions. We should improve intervention planning and foster greater consistency between the Fund's funding and integrated peacebuilding strategies; develop clear guidelines, agreed on by all Members, for the selection of eligible countries and establish a fund replenishment mechanism to enable consistent and predictable use of resources; harmonize the time frames for choosing beneficiary countries for the three different windows; and develop a strategy for the donor community that will allow the Fund to become a reference point and catalyst of resources.

Lastly, allow me to express my deepest gratitude for their efforts to the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Permanent Representative of Japan; the Chairman of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, the Permanent Representative of El Salvador; and the Chairmen of the country-specific configurations, the Permanent Representatives of the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the Permanent Representative of Brazil and the Permanent Representative of Belgium. We also thank the Peacebuilding Support Office in New York and in the field, and welcome newly appointed Assistant Secretary-General Lute as the head of the Office.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Allow me first to express our appreciation to the President of the Assembly for convening this important joint debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218). We thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of his report on the Fund, and the Commission for its second annual report. We commend the good work of the Peacebuilding Support Office, which works closely with the members of the Commission. Our appreciation also goes to the United Nations Development Programme as the administrative agent of the Fund. Of course, we would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Japan and Chairman of the Commission for his sterling leadership.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Commission.

Having been entrusted with the responsibility of being a member of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for the past two years, Indonesia is pleased to see the Commission and the

Fund embark upon the fulfilment of their mandates. In that regard, my delegation will like to offer some remarks that would hopefully contribute to making the international peacebuilding architecture more robust.

First, when identifying peacebuilding priorities and challenges, the Commission has rightly pointed out the importance of giving equal attention to the issues of security, democracy and development. Those are key factors for nurturing a strong pluralistic society and lasting peace. Security sector reform or economic sector reform alone is not a panacea to ensure that a post-conflict country does not relapse into conflict.

There needs to be an integrated approach and, in order to implement a comprehensive approach in which the security and development dimensions reinforce each other, the disbursements by the Peacebuilding Fund should also reflect such an orientation. Indonesia also desires to see such an integrated approach be implemented in the wider United Nations system, including in the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, to address post-conflict challenges.

Secondly, all agree that national ownership should be the guiding principle in our engagement. We fully support the fact that the voice of a democratically elected Government, that can be held accountable to the people through elections, should be the bedrock of a nationally owned process, taking into account the voices of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the field. No matter how well-intentioned the international initiatives are, the needs identified by the national Government should be considered the blueprint by everyone. Time and again, we have seen that peace processes and the consolidation of peace work only if peace and development efforts are owned by society and fully assisted by the international community.

Thirdly, we should not shy away from giving more decisive and strategic roles to the Organizational Committee of the Commission. That is in line with the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission. While the four country-specific configurations under the good leadership of the present and past chairpersons have shown the benefits of the unique composition of country configurations, the Organizational Committee should continue to focus on thematic strategies and wider policies on peacebuilding.

In that regard, we commend the Organizational Committee efforts under the chairmanship of Japan in considering the role of the private sector in peacebuilding and for underscoring its potential engagement in providing both financial and non-financial support.

A task force set up for that purpose by the Organizational Committee earlier this year focused on tangible ways through which the Peacebuilding Commission can contribute to the strengthening of the private sector's engagement in post-conflict peacebuilding, as part of the Commission's mandate to bring together all relevant actors to marshal support and resources. That consideration included three particular areas, partnerships with private foundations, microfinance and remittances. As a follow-up to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission task force, we hope that the Organizational Committee will consider taking up some of the task force's recommendations for fulfilling the Commission's mandate to marshal resources.

The strategic role and policy deliberations of the Organizational Committee will be crucial. The Security Council, through its presidential statement S/PRST/2008/16 of 20 May 2008, has also encouraged the Peacebuilding Commission to explore ways to support national efforts in affected countries to secure sustainable peace more rapidly and effectively. The views of the Peacebuilding Commission are also very helpful when the Secretary-General provides advice to the United Nations organs on how to coordinate peacebuilding activities and to generate and utilize resources most effectively.

Fourthly, as stated in the report, the Commission should continue to make efforts to create closer strategic ties between its engagements and the use of the Peacebuilding Fund. The report highlights the need to have innovative approaches to linking the initial catalytic financial outlay through the Peacebuilding Fund with more sustained and significantly larger funding sources.

As it has been noted, the Peacebuilding Fund disbursement and implementation are based on three mechanisms: window I for countries under the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, window II for non-Peacebuilding Commission countries and window III for emergency situations. The Secretary-General has the discretionary authority for windows II and III. For

window I, there is still room to improve relations between the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund.

We note the excellent work of the Peacebuilding Support Office in this regard, but we stress that the involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission members in steering the process should be greater. The countries should be involved from the early planning stage of identifying the projects and in the establishment of clear evaluation mechanisms.

For windows II and III, we commend the important work of the Secretary-General in their effective utilization. The Member States could be involved further by, inter alia, improving the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund. By further involving the Member States in the strategic decision-making process for windows II and III, the effectiveness of the Fund would improve, and the ownership of Member States would increase.

It is also important to start mapping out ways on how the private sector can be brought on board for its valuable contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund. We are positive that the recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission task force on the private sector would also be helpful here. The United Nations Development Programme could take up those practical recommendations, and if the Peacebuilding Commission agrees, views could be sought from the Programme on how further concrete steps might be undertaken to engage the private sector entities.

Fifthly, public awareness and visibility of the Commission's work should be improved by making the work of the Peacebuilding Commission prominent in regional and subregional organizations, as well as at the international financial institutions and other pertinent forums.

Finally, I would like to share a few thoughts on how Indonesia sees the General Assembly playing its important role in ensuring that the United Nations peacebuilding machinery functions well to produce maximum output in the field.

The General Assembly can be very helpful, and must exert greater effort in seeing that the United Nations departments and agencies incorporate the peacebuilding priorities and challenges appropriately in the relevant strategies of the United Nations system.

In that regard, the President of the General Assembly could play his critical convening role by holding regular and substantive interactions among the Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Therein, relevant lessons learned and best practices can be shared, with the development of new synergies. Such exchanges can also ensure better coordination among those vital bodies. Their combined voice will aid the advocacy for the Commission, particularly with regard to garnering assistance for the recommendations of Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies of the countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda.

Indonesia reiterates its commitment to the cause of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund and will continue to work with others on tangible measures to improve the outcome of both.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

I wish to express our support for the statement delivered by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

The Nordic countries recognize the progress made since the establishment in 2006 of the Peacebuilding Commission, in particular the important work of the country-specific configurations.

We welcome the appointment of Jane Holl Lute and her efforts to further strengthen the capacity and improve the focus of the Peacebuilding Commission. With the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, we need to streamline the working methods of the Commission to allow for more countries on the agenda and to focus our efforts at the strategic level to deliver on the vision of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In that regard, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of seeking partnerships and coherence in relevant activities within and outside the United Nations with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, regional and subregional organizations, and international financial institutions.

Within the peacebuilding architecture, we see a need to better define the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office in terms of giving assistance and support to the Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Support Office should have a key

function in the strategic planning of the peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations.

At the same time, we need to explore ways to create synergies in order to respond to the challenges facing countries emerging from conflict in a coherent, timely and rational way. To that end, we strongly support the Peacebuilding Support Office's role in coordinating the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and early recovery, and look forward to actively engaging in the process of providing recommendations.

We wish to draw attention to the Early Recovery Policy Forum held earlier this month in Copenhagen, where a number of international policymakers and practitioners were gathered to put forward proposals on how to address gaps in capacity, strategy and funding when it comes to early recovery and peacebuilding. The Forum highlighted, inter alia, the need to speed up post-disaster damage and needs assessments, as well as the necessity of rapidly scaling up the capacity of resident coordinators in a crisis situation. We consider those and other conclusions of the Forum very useful in our efforts to further strengthen the Peacebuilding Commission and the wider peacebuilding architecture.

Our delegations have been strong contributors to the Peacebuilding Fund, which we believe to be a vital tool to address immediate needs in countries emerging from conflicts. In conflict environments, speed is of the essence. We clearly see room for improvement in the management of the Fund in order for it to work efficiently as a catalyst for more sustained support mechanisms.

We look forward to the Office of Internal Oversight Services review and the recommendations of the Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group later this month in order to further improve the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the Fund. We hope the evaluation will provide clear recommendations to address questions regarding the Fund's function.

The Nordic countries would welcome further clarity on the scope and allocation procedure for the three funding windows, an improved and transparent accountability framework and strengthened capacity in the management of the Fund. We think that the in-country relationship between the Fund and the Commission could be further clarified. Furthermore, peacebuilding gaps continue to go unfilled, and we would consider it useful to revisit the possibility of using the Fund's funds to support United Nations Secretariat entities and their missions. We look forward to working with Member States and to considering improvements to the Fund in the context of this Assembly.

In closing, allow me to express the gratitude of the Missions of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden for the reports submitted under these agenda items. They contain valuable information and form a good basis for our discussions.

Ms. Jahan (Bangladesh): It would be remiss of me to begin without thanking Ambassador Yukio Takasu for his excellent stewardship of the Peacebuilding Commission and his presentation of the Commission's report on its second session. Appreciation is also owed to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on the Peacebuilding Fund. I also take this opportunity to welcome and extend my delegation's full support to the newly appointed Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Ms. Jane Holl Lute. Our appreciation also goes to the former Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Carolyn McAskie, for her contribution to the cause of peacebuilding.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus. We would, however, like to elaborate on a few points.

The Peacebuilding Commission has come a long way in unifying the three main pillars of our Organization — peace and security, development and human rights — in a more integrated approach to peacebuilding. The Commission, as we are all aware, was established to address a lacuna in the United Nations structure: to reduce a post-conflict country's risk of relapsing into the quagmire of the self-perpetuating spiral of conflict and crisis. The founding resolution was aimed at addressing the special needs of countries emerging from conflicts. The Commission, in its second year, has made significant strides in its efforts to consolidate peace in the countries on its agenda: Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. We hope that it will be likewise for the new country on the agenda, the Central African Republic.

We are pleased that the methods of work of the Commission have been further consolidated during the second year of its operation. Given the complexity of its work and a demanding mandate, the Commission's

second session was very satisfactory. The formulation of country-specific Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies is considered to be the right approach. It has become an effective tool for peacebuilding strategies. We congratulate the respective Chairs of the country-specific configurations for their outstanding contributions to the Commission's work. The Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund can also claim their share of credit. We especially commend the countries of Sierra Leone, Burundi and Guinea-Bissau for their cooperation and for taking national ownership of Commission initiatives.

In enumerating the achievements of the past two years, one should not be complacent, as much remains to be done. My delegation is of the view that the operational relations of the Commission with the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, other intergovernmental United Nations bodies, the relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, national stakeholders, financiers and civil society should be further strengthened. The Organizational Committee should inject more dynamism into the peacebuilding architecture by playing a more decisive lead role. There should be greater coordination among all the peacebuilding initiatives at the country level.

A built-in system for stocktaking, in order for the Commission to build on its own peacebuilding achievements is necessary. In that respect, we welcome the establishment of a monitoring and tracking mechanism. It will be useful in monitoring the implementation of the framework and subsequently assessing its accountability and effectiveness. That will further allow the Commission to make necessary adjustments in its engagements. With the mechanism in place, the Commission, in our view, will be able to have the maximum impact on the ground.

The Working Group on Lessons Learned should devote some time to sharing the valuable experiences of the troop-contributing countries in peacekeeping. One of the key factors for the success of the Commission's work is the attention of the international community to its peacebuilding activities in the countries of engagement. The Commission and its work should therefore be given adequate visibility through outreach activities in order to retain that attention. We also welcome the Commission's decision to finance the field missions to the countries on its agenda.

My delegation is of the view that, in order to attain sustainable development, we should focus more on the issue of economic recovery in post-conflict societies. In order to further the work of the Commission, we believe that efforts should also be directed towards building pluralist political institutions; creating peace constituencies; restoring an environment of mutual trust, confidence and tolerance; and, ultimately, establishing a process of societal reconciliation and healing.

We can contribute to making peacebuilding initiatives more effective and more suited to realities on the ground through external material support. We emphasize ever-greater ownership of that process by the respective Governments of the countries on the agenda. National ownership, in our view, is a key to sustaining progress. Post-conflict societies must take charge of their own destiny. We have seen how home-grown ideas, such as microcredit and women's non-formal education, can work miracles in economic recovery and women's empowerment. The Commission should include that as an integral element in its strategies.

The Peacebuilding Fund has a critical role to play. We are heartened by the fact that the Fund has exceeded the target of $250 million. That is testimony to the continued commitment of the international community to the goal of peacebuilding.

We feel that members of the Commission should be more frequently updated on the operations of the Peacebuilding Fund and provided with information on disbursements with adequate lead time. The relationship between the Commission and the Fund and their individual roles have to be made clear to the stakeholders on the ground in order to dispel confusion as regards eligibility for Peacebuilding Fund support.

It is indeed a shared moral obligation to be vigilant about the special needs of countries emerging from conflict and making steps towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction. It is crucial to fully integrate the economic recovery and development dimension in the process of peacebuilding. As more countries are brought under its consideration, the work of the Commission has rapidly expanded. To cope with the increasing workload, the Commission and its supporting bodies will require more political and material support.

Bangladesh, as one of the largest troop-contributing countries, is actively engaged in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are equally happy to be associated with the Commission as a member. We will remain closely associated with its work in the future, and it is our combined responsibility to see to it that the Commission can fully function as a competent intergovernmental advisory body addressing post-conflict situations and as the spearhead for a coordinated, coherent and integrated peacebuilding architecture. The international community should come forward to assist the Commission in fulfilling its mandate.

Mr. Sen (India): We appreciate the scheduling of this timely joint debate on the second report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) and the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218).

Let me begin by congratulating Japan on its work as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, in a tenure that has lasted somewhat longer than might have been expected at the outset. I also express our appreciation for the Chairs of the Commission's country-specific configurations and the Working Group on Lessons Learned. I must make special mention of the delegation of Norway, the former Permanent Representative of which chaired the configuration on Burundi with commitment. Let me also welcome the new Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Ms. Jane Holl Lute, and assure her of India's continued constructive support.

I also associate my delegation with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). We appreciate Jamaica's work in coordinating the NAM caucus within the Peacebuilding Commission.

I have only a few additional points to add in the context of the reports of the Peacebuilding Commission and on the Peacebuilding Fund. Our comments are based both on our abiding commitment to the objectives of the Peacebuilding Commission and on our conviction that useful lessons may be drawn from our collective experience over the period that both bodies have been in existence.

First, we need to guard ourselves against either excessive pessimism or premature celebrations regarding the relevance or efficacy of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund thus far. On the positive side, the fact that we now have four countries on the agenda of the Commission, all at their request, is undoubtedly a good sign. The finalization of Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies for three of those countries and the review of two of those Strategies are all signs of progress. It is no exaggeration to say that the Peacebuilding Commission has indeed become an established player in the United Nations context.

However, while the steady consolidation of a role for the Peacebuilding Commission within the lexicon of the international system is a good outcome, it is not a sufficient achievement of itself for all of us to take pride in. We need to continue to make the Commission relevant to the countries that it seeks to assist by moving decisively towards a pragmatic, circumstance-specific approach. For too long we in the Commission have spent time in debates that veer between prescriptive solutions and a conditionality-based approach to inflexible positions. As long as we have our positions predetermined before we objectively examine the situation in a country seeking assistance, we will not be able to provide truly dispassionate and situation-specific advice. That is also one reason why we appear collectively unable to genuinely listen to what post-conflict countries actually want when they seek the Peacebuilding Commission's assistance.

Secondly, to ensure that the advice that is provided by the Peacebuilding Commission is relevant and useful, we must focus on two aspects. The first is to continue to expand our access to focused, specific and objective information from the ground. Here the Peacebuilding Support Office must play an important role, for without a clear and unbiased channel for inputs from the ground, listing key challenges and mapping gaps in the availability of resources to meet such challenges, the Commission cannot provide effective advice. Moreover, since there will inevitably be a disparity in information flow between those members that have representation on the ground and those that do not, that disparity could well prejudice the discourse within the Peacebuilding Commission, to no one's benefit.

The second aspect is the need for effective two-way dialogue between countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Commission itself. Such dialogue will be most meaningful if we can make the transition to ensuring that the Commission's advice

is based on a light-touch approach. By that I mean that the Commission should not take on the task of advising States on post-conflict consolidation. Instead, it should help the State concerned to identify and utilize genuine international expertise in addressing such sensitive issues.

The lightness of the Peacebuilding Commission's touch also relates to the question of national ownership, which all of us endorse as a core principle of the Commission's involvement. That relates to the need to strengthen a representative and effective Government in the country concerned. Eventually, it is the Government of the country that is answerable if it is unable to deliver on peace consolidation strategies, and that answer must be given to the people it represents.

It is also the Government of the country that will need to manage processes beyond the country's engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission. It follows logically therefore that our primary focus must be on enhancing the legitimacy, effectiveness and absorptive capacity of the country's administrative and governing system. Without that, we will never have the tools in place for our own efforts to assist in post-conflict peacebuilding.

That is also the case for the Peacebuilding Support Office. While there has been a welcome effort made to include the Support Office on the ground in the countries where the Commission has an involvement, much more needs to be done. To begin with, the capacity of the Support Office needs to be expanded, but that must also be matched within the United Nations system by a willingness to genuinely include the Office, rather than to zealously guard turf.

Thirdly — and this point is a related one — we need to make greater efforts to energize the coordination aspect of the Peacebuilding Commission's mandated role. Currently, neither the Commission nor the Support Office within the United Nations has been able to leverage their unique and cross-cutting positions to perform that task. To those who argue that the Commission is not as yet ready for it, the counter-argument is that, unless it is given that task, it can never be ready to coordinate international efforts. Furthermore, it also begs the question as to why major donor organizations are sought after to be part of the Peacebuilding Commission if not to enhance its coordination role.

Fourthly, while we have certainly done better in this past year in focusing attention and assisting in the marshalling of resources, much more can and must be done. Advice alone will not consolidate peace; certainly not if it isn't matched with either material or policy assistance. Mobilization of resources is the key vehicle by which post-conflict societies can set course upon the road to peace consolidation and development.

As a contributor to the Peacebuilding Fund, and as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission's Organizational Committee, we welcomed the operationalization of the Fund, just as we welcome the idea of a renewed resource-mobilization drive towards the end of this year. We also welcome the improved synergy between the Commission and the Fund, although much more needs to be done to ensure that the objectives of the Commission's policy advice and the actual disbursement of funds to the State concerned are actually in consonance. There remains a troubling lag between the two that needs to be dealt with when we consider a new mandate for the Fund. Unless the disbursement of funds improves, and unless the strategic link between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund is better, neither body will achieve its full potential.

In that context, I must underline that we remain unconvinced that the three-window structure of drawing upon the Peacebuilding Fund, in particular, window II, has been particularly useful to either the Fund or the Commission. Even the report on the Peacebuilding Fund appears to suggest, in paragraph 33, that the proactive strategy of identifying additional countries eligible for support for funds involved selection of countries receiving high-level visits from the United Nations, those that approached the Secretariat directly, and, in one case that we know, a country that did not approach the Secretariat, but was given funds in order to prolong the Organization's role there.

That can hardly be called effective criteria for funding the Peacebuilding Fund. Indeed, since the entire process of window II consideration takes place without inputs from either the Member States or the Commission, it is hard to know what criteria actually apply. In fact, window II does not rise to the level of even window-dressing.

There is also a potential problem of the blurring of monitoring lines, if a State begins to receive

assistance under Peacebuilding Fund window II, before eventually coming on to the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda. Those and several other issues need to be resolved during the discussions on the Fund.

I would also like to reiterate, in the context of the better utilization of Peacebuilding Fund allocations, the point I made earlier about enhancing the mandate and the capacity of the Peacebuilding Support Office. Without that, we will always be in a less than satisfactory position regarding the utilization of money allocated under the Fund. It is not enough to ascribe that problem to the weak absorptive capacity in the country concerned. It is precisely because absorptive and administrative capacities are weak that assistance has been sought. Therefore we need to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund work together with the Peacebuilding Support Office here in New York to provide clear instructions. There must also be a dedicated unit on the ground dealing with projects funded by the Peacebuilding Fund.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the mechanism of peacebuilding is integrally related to the larger question of a collective approach. If we continue to segregate ourselves, not only within the Peacebuilding Commission, but also among the Commission, the Support Office and the Fund and between all three and the rest of the United Nations system, we will fail to provide a coherent and coordinate response to those who look to the United Nations to make a difference. That should not happen. I reaffirm India's commitment to doing whatever is in our power to ensure that that is never the case.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to consider the report submitted by the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) at the conclusion of its second session, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/180.

We thank the Chairman of the Commission, Ambassador Takasu of Japan, and the Vice-Chairs, Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador and Ambassador Christian of Ghana, for their work. We also commend the tireless efforts of Ambassador Løvald of Norway, Ambassador Majoor of the Netherlands and Ambassador Viotti of Brazil, and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations for Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, respectively. In addition, we take this opportunity to express our support for Ambassador Grauls of Belgium, who recently began his work as Chair of the country-specific configuration for the Central African Republic. Furthermore, my delegation recognizes the fruitful efforts of Ms. Carolyn McAskie as head of the Peacebuilding Support Office and welcomes Ms. Jane Holl Lute, new head of the Office.

Two years after the work of the Peacebuilding Commission began, the new body resulting from the 2005 United Nations reform has made progress in attaining its objectives. During the period under review, we have noted that, through its country-specific configurations, the Commission has definitely — albeit not without difficulty — helped to strengthen the national institutions of Burundi and Sierra Leone. At the same time, it has included new countries in its agenda, such as Guinea-Bissau and, more recently, the Central African Republic.

We are pleased to observe that, during its second session, in keeping with the principles of its mandate, the Commission has redoubled its efforts to improve its focus and its working methods. The establishment of comprehensive peacebuilding strategies and follow-up mechanisms for Burundi and Sierra Leone is one example; others are the Commission's ability to draw on lessons learned and its flexibility in adapting them to new national specificities. It did so in the case of Guinea-Bissau, whose country-specific configuration, to which Mexico belongs, adopted its Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding on 1 October.

We commend the Commission for all of that. We hope that the experiences gained and lessons learned will form the basis for continued improvement in the system-wide coherence of the United Nations system through coordinated and comprehensive action, strengthening the link between security, development and human rights as essential components of sustainable peace. That will help the dividends of peace to reach the populations of the countries on the Commission's agenda as quickly as possible, which in turn is a prerequisite for sustaining any peace and development process over the short, medium and long terms.

We hope that the Commission will continue to maintain its flexible and inclusive character and to carry out its transparent and integrative work. In that connection, we support the more frequent holding of informal plenary meetings, such as that held on

29 January 2008. My delegation believes that such meetings permit a flow of information and promote interaction among organs, in addition to arousing greater interest by the membership in the substantive work of the Commission and in possibly participating to support the countries on its agenda.

The Strategic Frameworks are the key and the basis for ensuring that the Commission can carry out its work of coordination with respect to the international community's support for the countries concerned. National ownership, mutual accountability and ongoing commitment are decisive aspects in formulating the Strategic Frameworks, which, my delegation believes, should also be seen as State commitments to the United Nations peace architecture and should outlast current administrations. It is only in that way that the attainment of medium- and long-term peace and development objectives can be assured.

With regard to the acquisition of resources, my delegation agrees with the view expressed in the report before us. It is extremely important that the Commission continue to develop innovative methods for mobilizing national and international resources. In practice, some members of the Commission have increased their participation regarding the countries on its agenda. Other members have even become donors of financial and technical assistance, contributing to national capacity-building. That practice should continue to be promoted, and my country reaffirms its firm commitment in that regard.

Mexico is grateful for the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218), which enables Member States to carry out the mandate to provide normative guidance on the use of resources. The increase in the donor list and the fact that we have exceeded funding expectations are tangible proof of the commitment and confidence of the membership with regard to the Fund. However, my delegation reaffirms the need to make financial contributions to the Fund predictable so that it can respond more swiftly to the many requests of post-conflict countries meeting the requirements for its support.

My delegation welcomes the transparency exercise carried out by the Peacebuilding Support Office by holding periodic informal meetings to inform donors about the financial situation and performance of the Fund. Nevertheless, we must continue to work to improve its functioning and adopt appropriate methods that will enable us to clearly and precisely assess contributions to the Fund in the various aspects of the peacebuilding agenda. We believe that the launching of its mandate review will be an ideal opportunity to undertake that task.

Finally, it is in a spirit of confidence and cooperation that Mexico has decided to renew its voluntary contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund this year. We reaffirm once again our commitment to the United Nations architecture mandated to promote and strengthen peacebuilding processes.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Let me join others in expressing gratitude to the President for convening this important debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its second session (A/63/92). South Africa aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

South Africa welcomes the second report of the Peacebuilding Commission. The report provides a detailed account of the work and activities of the Commission during the second year of its operation and is a result of serious consultations among members of the Commission. We also wish to thank the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission Organizational Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Yukio Takasu, Permanent Representative of Japan, for his sterling work. We are grateful too for the significant contribution made by the Chairpersons of the country-specific configurations on Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic, as well as by the Chairperson of the Working Group on Lessons Learned. My delegation also welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218).

South Africa applauds the accomplishments of the Peacebuilding Commission during its second session, particularly the important strides towards implementing its mandate and core functions. We believe that a strong Commission is crucial for addressing challenges associated with conflict, instability and underdevelopment. A successful Commission is important in preventing post-conflict countries from relapsing into conflict.

The annual report highlights the progress made and challenges faced by the Commission at its previous session. Among the successes have been the Commission's continued efforts aimed at strengthening

its relationship and cooperation with relevant organs and institutions, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council.

At the same time, my delegation underlines the importance of strengthened cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and relevant regional and subregional organizations. It is in this context that the African Union continues to play its role in the peacebuilding field, including through its Policy Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, which places emphasis on addressing the root causes of conflict.

We are pleased that, as reflected in the Commission's report, the Organizational Committee held an interactive dialogue with the Chairperson of the African Union Peace and Security Council and received a briefing from Joaquim Chissano, the former President of Mozambique, during the reporting period. We look forward to further interactions of this nature, as they are crucial in strengthening and promoting cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

My delegation also commends the establishment of regular contacts between the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council on issues relating to the work of the Commission. In that context, we reaffirm our continued support for the strengthening of those relationships.

Now that the United Nations peacebuilding architecture is in place, the challenge is how to consolidate the achievements made thus far. South Africa firmly believes that the Peacebuilding Commission should continue to be driven by Member States. The Organizational Committee must continue to be the focal point of all Commission activities and decisions, and its central role should be strengthened.

National ownership of the peacebuilding process remains fundamental in assisting post-conflict countries to rebuild their institutions and sustain peace and development. To that end, we commend the Governments of the countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission for their active role in efforts to rebuild their respective countries.

My delegation welcomes the report's acknowledgement of the importance of official development assistance, trade and investment in post-conflict countries. We hope that the Commission will continue to develop methods for mobilizing international and domestic resources. At the same time, quick-impact projects and sufficient injection of predictable resources in countries emerging from conflict are crucial to ensuring stability and development on the ground.

In conclusion, as we gradually build up the experience of the Peacebuilding Commission, we need to put more emphasis on the nexus between peace and development. In that regard, we support a greater and stronger focus on the development agenda of the countries on the agenda of the Commission.

Finally, South Africa remains committed to the cause of the Peacebuilding Commission. We will continue to work with others towards ensuring that post-conflict countries do not relapse into conflict and towards maximizing the Commission's impact on the ground, in full alignment, cooperation and accord with national Government policies and strategies.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.